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TITLE : TASTE-IMPROVING FOOD MATERIAL, AND FOOD AND DRINK CONTAINING THE SAME

ABSTRACT : **PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED:** To obtain a taste-improving food material entertaining no fear of allergy caused by a protein, excellent in digestion and absorption, and useful for prevention or the like of disease such as arteriosclerosis by allowing a specific glutamic acid decarboxylase to act on a degradation product of milk or the like to convert glutamic acid to  $\gamma$ -aminobutyric acid.

**SOLUTION:** This taste-improving food material is obtained by using a degradation product of milk, corns or cacao beans as a degradation product of a food protein, allowing a milled product of a pumpkin and/or a cucumber, or a glutamic acid decarboxylase extracted from the pumpkin and/or the cucumber to act on the degradation product to convert the glutamic acid in the degradation product into  $\gamma$ -aminobutyric acid. Preferably, the milled product or the glutamic acid decarboxylase is allowed to act thereon at 20-50°C under the condition of pH 5.5-6.2, preferably 5.8 caused by the acid. The pH regulation is preferably carried out by using one or more kinds of acids selected from citric acid, acetic acid, malic acid, tartaric acid and succinic acid.

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